182 Letter from R. D. Webb to Mrs. Chapman

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GARRISON MSS.

Dublin 3rd of 11th month, 1846

My dear Friend—

As the Cunard Steam-boat leaves Liverpool tomorrow, I must hasten to ~~tell thee the result~~ write about the Fair. of my enquiries about the illuminated covers. I had an answer duly from the artists — and the price they ask was neither more or less than £9 for 500 covers without the paper which should be supplied to them. If 1000 were required they would cost £13, the price being reduced in proportion to the numbers done. This of course set the matter at rest. If it had been no more than £3-10 or £4 I would have put 10 dollars of my own to thy ten, and ~~I~~ have ordered them — but it would be outrageous waste to give £9 for such gingerbread when there would be no chance of a remunerating return.

In thy letter of Oct. 15 which arrived by private hand two or three days since, I was made almost to blush — I certainly should have blushed had I been young enough — at all that was said about portraits. The information about the portraits was in itself very interesting — but it was provoked by my having said that I would prefer a portrait of any of the clique to all the books that H. C. W. so unceremoniously begged on my behalf. Now this was merely said as indication of my preferences — not as in any way begging for either the books or the likenesses. I never gave Henry Wright any reason for putting forward ~~such~~ a petition for these books, — for I don't want them — and ~~I~~ never said I wished for them. I would be sorry to be in any way the cause of expense to any of my friends in Boston — they have more than enough to do with their time and money — and if I am to talk of reward for what I wish to do (rather than for what I do) for the cause we are mutually interested in, I have my full recompense in this familiar chit chat intercourse that has sprung up between us — so much beyond what a few years ago I would have dared to ask or think. Indeed I look on myself as peculiarly fortunate in this respect — that I am on such free and easy epistolary terms with the very individuals with whom above all others I would wish to correspond. You will laugh — and think in your inmost hearts that if I knew but all, I would probably not look on you as such very great lions — but this cannot be helped — you don't know distance lends enchantment to the to the winds - and clothes mortals as well as mountains in celestial tinges. More than a year ago D. L. Child in the Standard quoted this couplet of Campbell's in remarking on some remarks of mine about Garrison in which I put him far above O'Connell in a moral point of view. How true it may be really, truly, and undisputedly with you, of course I cannot tell - but with my opinion of Garrison's real conduct & character, & my Knowledge of O'Connell, there could be not be a greater piece of absurd injustice to your great man than to compare him with ours. In magnanimity, in truthfulness, in conscientiousness, in integrity, in singleness of mind, in disinterestedness, in purity of life, in any of the elements of a truly beautiful and morally great character it is only the naked truth to say that they are not to be spoken of together - and that Garrison is immeasurably the greater man of the two. No wonder then that I should look upon it as a great pleasure and privilege to be esteemed among the friends of such a man and his fellow labourers in the great cause to which his life is devoted. There now - I have said enough about the pictures.

About the Fair - I had a letter from Isabel Jennings - they intend sending their box by next steamer - and so do we - but ours will be hardly worth sending - quantum mutatus ab illo! - not half the size of last year I am afraid - Lizzy Poole has been for the last two months paying her first visit to England - part of the time in London at George Thompson's - in Brighton, in Sheffield, in Rochdale with the Anti Corn Law Brights & enjoying the society of Oswald Murray the brilliant only son of honest John Murray of Bowling Bay - in Manchester with R. R. R. Moore and the great anti corn law women there - at balls (!) and parties - with music - & beauty and glorification to no end. She has an intense faculty of enjoyment that has been pent in but not dulled by her quaker training which she abhors and revolts from ~~tw~~. She loves liberty and will have it. Of all the people I know personally she seems to me to have ~~most~~ the true poetic temperament most thoroughly developed. She is greatly the creature of impulse and has a perfect thirst for the beautiful and the ideal. Well then, a cousin of mine Anne Davis, also of Waterford, has been nigh Death's door with a heart complaint and she generally contributed bountifully - Very little was ever done in Dublin except what we got from James Haughton's daughters and they only wrote to please their father - and have done very little this year. So that altogether we will make a poor show - we will do the best we can ourselves - and you must take the will for the deed. But this I know you will - so there is no need for must.

Thy explanation of the false position of Rogers and French seems very plain — I feared something of this kind from the first time that I saw any signs of a breeze between them & Foster in the Herald. My hope was that it might not turn out a single Emancipator transfer such as would give room for scoffing to the enemy. It makes me sore to think of such a man as Rogers being blinded to sanction any thing unfair. I would not like to circulate even in our own circle the letters I had from thyself & from E. Q. on this head. We are all more or less of idolaters and nobody likes to see his idols spat upon. It would make James Haughton very angry with Rogers to see these explanations and he would talk to professors and profane about it in a way that would make my ears tingle. He is too honest — He spares nobody but O'Connell — and I think he is blind about him. If he should attack him today — he forgets all tomorrow — and Dan is as great & as good, & as pure and as disinterested the next day as ever he was. — I am not surprised nor much disappointed about Bradburn — almost since I knew him first I esteemed him too decidedly political in his aspirations to be much of an abolitionist — but there is much that is interesting & delightful about him independent of his qualifications for martyrdom — I am truly sorry that he has become one of Leavitt's luminaries. ~~and I~~ cannot comprehend his having gone over to such men as Elizur Wright, Phelps, Colver &c. — the man has a more perfect perception than he has of the merits & demerits of these people. [Hast thou heard that an edition of Whittier's Poems, much more full than any American volume, has been published by Clarke (who published Longfellow) with an illuminated cover & very neat. It is edited & prefaced by Elizur Wright who left out the ~~[illegible]~~ lines addressed to Garrison]x with a meanness in full keeping with all that E. Q. told me of him in his last letter. I am glad I made those enquiries about the Emancipator & Liberator — and I cherish the information about the conspiracy and distribution — these scraps of private history are very interesting to me. [Some numbers of the Emancipator were recently sent to us in this gratuitous way to ~~R. Allen he lent them to me — for he reads~~ hardly any thing himself. } [I thought them intolerably stupid, & marvelled how any moral reformer could feed on such husks in ~~[illegible]~~ preference

If the New York Regenerator yet lives and if you are in the way of meeting with an odd number occasionally, I would be glad to get one, to see how it goes on — I saw some of the early numbers and they contained some good things among a great many queer ones.

[x For these lines, see our poetical column. Ed. Stand.]

to the heart-warming and inspiriting pages of the Liberator. Nothing could give me a more living sense of the rage for politics in America than the simple fact of such trash as the Emancipator is filled with being acceptable to people who pretend to be engaged heart and soul in a great philanthropic enterprise. How blind they must be to think of gaining so great an object by such petty means. Nay verily, party plotting will never bring down American Slavery from its pride of place. They might as well try to worry a bear in his native wilds with a pack of cottage curs. ~~"Here's my sentiments"~~

I cant help being very sorry for Whittier – he is a true poet – and I love the soul of song. ~~There is a very sweet young cousin of Hannah's who dotes on Whittier and has him all by heart and repeats his ditties in a soft, sweet, low voice that it is delightful to listen to.~~ He is the only true poet the Yankees have produced – & I have by no means "got shut," as you say my Pennsylvanian, of my esprit de corps. I honor George Fox and think that the early friends though often fanatical & sometimes ridiculous were after all a fine set of old fellows. My children will never be as good a Quaker as I am myself – ~~I have read heaps of friends books both ancient & modern – which they never do in either tense – and they hardly ever go to meeting and never to any other place of worship.~~ I was pretty ~~set at my ease~~ by some excellent remarks ~~another time~~ in a capital sermon by Mr Chapin ~~Whitman~~, in a late Herald of Freedom – on the natural growth of the religious sentiment, ~~which he thinks has no natural existence in the breast of a child – but~~ is the result of the reflection & comparison of matured years. I admired that sermon so much that I read it aloud three times. I read James Martineau's first volume with great pleasure – it is full of beautiful thoughts. His Rationale of Religious Enquiry was the first book that directed my attention into the forbidden grounds of Heterodoxy since I attained to years of discretion – for when I was a boy I was often puzzled, as what boy who thinks is not puzzled with the hard things given him to swallow, in the way of points of belief.

Hannah has been suffering a good deal from swelled face & tooth ache for some days past – but is now much better & is at this present writing reposing after the tedium of reading the last ~~th~~ proof of the first sheet of H.C.W.'s "Six Months at Graefenberg"

Thine truly R.D.W.

GARRISON MSS.

I am ~~a~~ few days ago [I had a letter from E. Pease. She is going to make up & and more than make up for any deficiencies of ours.] for her box will be worth £50 exclusive of [Harriet Martineau's splendid piece of worsted work] – which I must ~~[illegible]~~ then I go to Limerick. This [should sell for more than its value as a piece of work – for surely it is something to have such work from such hands as hers. She is one of my greatest among women. I have never seen her nor is it likely I ever shall. She is a great woman – the associate of nobles – while I am a printer and not a rich one. Those who have lived in England, are aware of the power of caste in this respect – in this country – where every additional thousand pounds a man gains or loses appears to influence his position in society.] [The great subject of interest in our circle at present is Father Mathew's difficulties and the means of relieving them. The Mathew Testimonial Committee, formed nearly 18 months ago which was intended to superintend the disposition of a collection for the purpose of forming a permanent memorial of the Apostle's labours, have come to light and life again – and are acting with energy for the purpose of making a collection on a large scale throughout England & Ireland to release him from his debts and with the surplus if any, endow him with an annuity for life so as to make him independent and enable him to pursue his good work without danger of further embarrassment. The sum which James Haughton brilliantly aims to collect is £20,000.] ~~If the half of it is got. it will be a great thing. [The debts appear to be about £7000 – a large sum – & probably contracted as far as appears. Father M. appears to be after all an Irishman – improvident & unbusinesslike in money matters – he handed out the money in all hands while he had it – and borrowed to~~ ~~[illegible]~~ ~~give it when he had not – kept no accounts – filed no invoices – & has got into a great hobble which it will take a good and united effort of many rich & powerful people to free him from.~~ [The Duke of Leinster & the English Earl of Devon attended the Committee a day or two since – many influential men are upon it along with some old stagers like James Haughton & R. Allen & myself – and I cannot but hope that such a feeling will be raised in Ireland as will do a good deal to effect our object. In England Father M. is greatly esteemed & I think something will be done there too. If the Washingtonian & Teetotal Societies in America saw fit to contribute for this object their money would be thankfully received & acknowledged & duly applied. I would like that something should come from America in order that the effort for Father M's relief should show how general throughout the world is the appreciation of his noble and successful labours for the good of his countrymen.]

4 I have been greatly amused with the racy extracts from the Essex County Washingtonian that I have seen of late in the Liberator and Herald. H.C.W. has told me something of Clapp - but I would rather have one of Rumneys living portraits. Will he give me one? Clapps style is remarkably like Rogers's - and he writes with great freedom, life, and originality. I think I will venture to send him a few lines enclosed in this - on Father Mathews behalf - perhaps he may take it into his head to sound a trumpet on our good man's behalf amongst the teetotallers of Yankeeland. Clapp's sketches of the Quakers are particularly good - they are true and real - he knows whom he has to do with. He takes them [illegible] fingers and touches them on the quick. Very few writers know how to talk of Quakers in this way - they caricature - Clapps talk would do as well for "our Society" in England or Ireland as for those of New England.. Some of his touches that I have seen would set good friends wild if they saw them. It is most disagreeable to most people as I know it would to me - to see ourselves held forth to the world precisely as in our inmost consciousness we know ourselves to be - no varnish - no flattery - all the as nature and art have made us - it is wormwood to our pride. Such a pill is Clapp for our Society - he need never apply for membership again if he has ever been disowned, which I think likely - he knows the secrets of the baby house too well.

[H.C.W. has now been here 9 weeks - chiefly employed in writing his account of his visit to Grafenberg.] It is a queer production made up of one part water cure and three parts nonresistance, anti-hanging, anti-slavery, anti war &c. Such a job as it is to get it ready for press - to cut out pages of extraneous extraneousities, to weed out yankeeisms so rooted into the composition that whole sentences and sometimes whole paragraphs have to be re-written, to get the scarified paper recopied, and ~~then~~ to go over the printed slips to make another rigid inquisition - all this is fully three times as laborious as the same amount of ordinary printing. Hannah who is deep in all those subjects that Henry shines in, takes the weight of the work as a labour of love - & I have the final ~~the~~ polishing up. and the crabbed criticism very much to myself. Henry's marvellous & truly admirable temper sustains him through all - as I am sure the temper of very few other authors could. [In a few days in consequence of a very pressing invitation from Wm Smeal & John Murray, H.C. goes to Glasgow to an annual meeting; but will be back immediately to superintend the publication of his book. He is a vast favourite with the children they hang about him - sit on his knee - and listen to his stories - & go out walking with him without end.] With grown up people out of our own immediate circle - he does not make much way. His singular attire & quaker address offend some - His harsh language and dogmatic style of argument many more. With many young women he is the man of men - & I don't know how he could have got on at all if it had not been for Ellen Pease's affectionate munificence.